



The Center Spotlight

www.centerfordairyexcellence.org ♦ Phone: 717-346-0849

Promoting Dairy's Value — On the Farm & In the Community

Editor's Note: This is part of a monthly series of timely articles and information from the Center for Dairy Excellence, a non-profit organization focused on strengthening Pennsylvania's dairy industry.

HARRISBURG, Pa. — Dairy farm families have a lot to be proud of — their care and commitment to their animals, their dedication to producing quality milk, their stewardship of the environment, and their role in supporting a healthy community are just a few.

June Dairy Month festivities are happening across the state and throughout the country to celebrate the many contributions dairy farm families make. But the celebration and education shouldn't just happen in June. Many dairy farmers dedicate the entire year to reaching out to the community.

Vicki Baker, a dairy farmer from Scottsdale, Westmoreland County, believes it is critical dairy farmers share their story with their neighbors and those who buy the products they produce.

"People drive by farms all of the time, but they don't think of them as businesses," she said. "They don't necessarily think about all of the people who work to bring food to our tables."

Baker is one of forty dairy farmers who are part of the Dairy Farmers Speakers Bureau, a group available to speak at community meetings like the Lions Club or Rotary Club.

"The speakers bureau gives me the opportunity to reach out to our customers — the people who buy our products every day," Baker said. "They want to buy our products, and they are looking for a reason to do that. Sometimes they only hear the negatives."

The Dairy Farmers Speakers Bureau is a program coordinated by the Pennsylvania Dairy Promotion Program, the Mid-Atlantic Dairy Association and the Center for Dairy Excellence to help dairy farmers share their story with the local community.

Other dairy farmers reach out to the local community through hosting farm tours or school events. Lisa Bush is a dairy farmer from Elmira, Chemung

County, N.Y., who has been hosting school groups on the farm for 25 years. She uses resources from the Center for Dairy Excellence to educate those who visit her farm.

"Farm tours are a big event for us," she said. "We feel it is important to have the students see the animals up close and learn where their food comes from. A hands-on experience is the best, and we serve ice cream and cheese samples at the end of the year."

The Bushes are also leaders of the local 4-H dairy club, and the club promotes both agriculture and dairy at many events throughout the year. "We go to farmers markets, county fairs, and Farm City Days."

The dairy princess program is another way to get involved in dairy promotion. In Pennsylvania, 237 young people work with 42 county committees on the local level to promote dairy products and the dairy industry.

Choosing Your Style of Promotion

As dairy farm numbers continue to decrease, it becomes increasingly more important for every dairy farm family to become "marketers" to promote what they do and why it is important.

Although not every dairy farmer can host farm tours or speak in front of large groups, each one can choose something they can do to promote the dairy industry and their individual farm to the local community. Maybe it is by visiting the local school district to greet the kids as they go through the lunch line or by serving ice cream at the local fair. Everyone has something they can do to help share the dairy story.

Many organizations have resources to help you reach out to the community. The Mid-Atlantic Dairy Association and the Pennsylvania Dairy Promotion Program (PDPP), the local Dairy Checkoff funded organizations, has educational information and promotion materials you can order. To learn more, visit



Timmy Miller, Stephanie VanRiper and Cameron Hauver are all 4-H members who share the dairy story with their local community.

www.dairyspot.org or call 215-627-8800.

Pennsylvania Dairy Princess and Promotion Services can help you coordinate a local dairy promotion committee or get you involved in one that already exists. To learn more about what that organization has to offer, visit www.padairy.org or call 717-599-4363.

Discover Dairy is another resource that is a website with a "farmers" section offering a farm tour guide and other resources to help in planning farm tours. It is made available through the Mid-Atlantic Dairy Association, PDPP and the Center for Dairy Excellence.

The center also offers other resources to help dairy farmers reach out to their communities. To find out more, call 717-346-0849 or visit www.centerfordairyexcellence.org. Click on "Producer," then on "I want to reach out to the local community."

Milk Margins Growing Despite All-Time High Feed Costs

Pennsylvania Dairy Industry Performance Scorecard Summary	Apr. 2010 Report	Apr. 2011 Report	Change from last year	Target range
Milk Cows	541,000 cows	543,000 cows	+0.40%	
Rolling 12-Mo. State Milk Production	10.579 bill. lbs.	10.727 bill. lbs.	+1.40%	10.8 bill. lbs.
Wholesale Milk Price	\$16.30/cwt.	\$22.00/cwt.	+34.97%	
PA Daily Feed Costs (cost of corn, soybean & hay at 65 lbs. milk)	\$5.46/cwt.	\$8.51/cwt.	+55.86%	
Milk Margin (IOFC @ 100# of Milk)	\$10.84/cwt.	\$13.99/cwt.	+29.06%	
Milk Production/Cow/Day	65.51 lbs.	64.77 lbs.	-1.12%	80 lbs.
% of Herds with 80+ lbs./cow/day	21%	18%	-13.19%	
Rolling 12-mo. Herd Production Average	20,813 lbs.	21,142 lbs.	+1.58%	25,000 lbs.
Average Somatic Cell Count	258,570	244,930	- 5.28%	200,000
% of Herds below 200,000 SCC	41%	46%	+ 17.83%	
Average Days In Milk	181 Days	186 Days	+ 2.73%	185 Days
Average Age to First Calving	25.5 months	25.5 months	—	21—24 mo.
Average Days to First Service	89 Days	88 Days	-0.81%	< 80 Days
Average Cull Rate (% left herd)	34.2%	35.8%	+ 4.80%	20—35%
Average Pregnancy Rate	18.73%	19.32%	+ 3.15%	> 20%
To view complete scorecard, visit:	www.centerfordairyexcellence.org			

HARRISBURG, Pa. — Milk margins, or the difference between the hundred-weight price of milk and the feed cost to produce 100 pounds of milk, continues to increase, up 29 percent from last April. Feed costs have reached an all-time high, at \$8.51 per hundredweight of milk.

Pennsylvania's rolling herd average continues to increase, up 1.58 percent from last year, although the state's monthly milk production fell three-quarters of a percent this month. Somatic cell counts remain low, down 5 percent from a year ago to 244,930.

Eighteen percent of the state's dairy herds on test are producing more than 80 pounds per day, while nearly 50 percent have a somatic cell count of below 200,000. Pregnancy rates are improving, while Days to First Service are down by one day.

Help to Reach Your Benchmarks

If your farm is looking for help in reaching your benchmarks, the "On-Farm Dairy Resource Team" and "Dairy Decisions Consultant" program may be helpful. To learn more, call the center at 717-346-0849.

To view the complete scorecard, go to www.centerfordairyexcellence.org. Click on the "SCORECARD" icon at the middle of the page. For more information about programs and resources available from the Center for Dairy Excellence, call 717-346-0849.



The Center for Dairy Excellence is proud to recognize Pennfield Feed as a supporter through the "Ally for Advancement" program. For more information about Pennfield, call 1-800-732-0467 or visit www.pennfield.com.

